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ABSTRACT

Consisting of material designed for practical application in the English classroom and representing all educational levels, this collection of articles contains a selection of the best presentations given at the fall 1986 meeting of the Southeastern Ohio Council of Teachers of English. Following an introduction by guest editor James L. Creighton, the articles and their authors are as follows : (1) "A Thousand Words" (Marilyn Price Combs); (2) "Community Problems: Readings for Writing" (Bill Elasky); (3) "Career Education in Seventh Grade?" (Lois Spencer); (4) "Career-Search Writing" (Frank Cronin); (5) "Literature Based Reading" (Mick Cummings); (6) "Global Language Awareness" (Carole Hancock and Debbi Winter); (7) "Successful Creative Writing in the Primary Grades" (Mary Ann Reutzell); (8) "Use of Composition to Promote Student Self-Esteem" (Dianna Sue Wayne); (9) "Students Critiquing Their Classmates' Papers: Training the Writer's Critical Skills" (Reid Huntley); (10) "Bear" (Bev Chapman and Brenda Flooding); (11) "Goals in the Spelling Curriculum" (Marlow Ediger); and (12) "Welcome to Camp Write-Along" (Diane Dorsey, Terry Stanford, and Judy Walker). A segment furnishing news and announcements of interest to members of the Southeastern Ohio Council of Teachers of English is appended. (NKA)

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A POTPOURRI OF PRACTICAL IDEAS



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Although each issue of *FOCUS* is devoted to a specific theme, all articles and news items about the teaching of English and Language Arts, especially in Southeastern Ohio, are invited. Letters in response to articles published in *FOCUS* are particularly welcome. Articles should be typed and double-spaced. Avoid footnotes whenever possible by including documentation in the text. Otherwise, follow The MLA Style Sheet (Second Edition). Send one copy with stamped, self-addressed envelope to:

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Volume XIII

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A POTPOURRI OF PRACTICAL IDEAS

James L. Creighton, Guest Editor

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BEAR

Bev Chapman and Brenda Flooding

GOALS IN THE SPELLING CURRICULUM

Marlow Ediger

WELCOME TO CAMP WRITE-ALONG!

Diane Dorsey, Terry Stanford,
and Judy Walker

NEWS/ NOTES/ ANNOUNCEMENTS

INTRODUCTION

A POTPOURRI OF PRACTICAL IDEAS

By

James L. Creighton
Guest Editor

This issue of FOCUS grew out of the presentations at one of the most successful SOCTE Fall Conferences in recent years. Designed for the working teacher, the event at Fort Frye High School in Beverly, presented a valuable, practical program for those in attendance.

Some of the best of those presentations are featured here. Their range demonstrates the breadth of conference ideas and approaches, elementary through college--there is truly something for everyone here. Innovative programs of Marilyn Combs and Bill Elasky offer plans for integrating the community and the school with significant impact on both students and people in their community. Career education which demonstrates successful and experimental approaches in the junior high and college respectively is detailed by Lois Spencer and Dr. Frank Cronin. Stimulating, suggestive, and informative are Bill Elasky's how-to article for replacing basal reading programs, the integration of foreign language introduction discussed by Carole Hancock and Debbie Winter, and Mary Anne Reutzel's plan for teaching writing to elementary students. Two presenters--Susie Wayne and Dr. Reid Huntley--deal with significant and specific practices which have application in every classroom where writing is taught. Bev Chapman and Brenda Floding's brief article barely covers their creative and stimulating approach to elementary reading.

Two articles are included which were not part of the conference, but which carry out the theme of being useful for working teachers. Dr. Ediger discusses spelling, and a clever approach to elementary writing is the subject of the article by Diane Dorsey, Terry Stanford, and Judy Walker.

Each teacher of English can glean some ideas from this issue--that further extension of our Fall Conference is what SOCTE and FOCUS signify. Enjoy!

Fort Frye High School
Beverly, Ohio

A THOUSAND WORDS . . .

Some uses of photographs in the teaching
of reading, English and social studies
in the primary grades

by

Marilyn Price Combs

Observers of young children have long been aware that in today's society, children are exposed to print and graphic symbols from their earliest days. Television advertising, product names, traffic and business signs, and informational signs of all kinds abound in our daily environment. Young children, as well as adults, recognize and gain meaning from these aspects of daily life. Many children entering school can recognize the brand name of their favorite cereal or soft drink, can respond correctly to traffic signals and stop signs, and understand the value of printed and graphic symbols in daily life.

A number of researchers, particularly those interested in the psycholinguistic aspects of reading, have documented children's early experiences with print and have called attention to the importance of such experience in children's acquisition of language.

Two such studies by Reid in Scotland and Downing in England reported that long before children could explain what people do when they read, they were able to interpret signs in their daily environment and to act appropriately. In other words, they read things that had meaning and importance for them although they were uncertain what people did when they read books. Smith has reported in detail the story of Matthew, age three and a half, who, although he recognized only a few letters of the alphabet and two words in addition to his name, knew that people located departments in a store by reading the signs and correctly read many such signs and was able to identify departments by them. In a study by Taylor and Waynant, first graders kept reading logs which revealed their reading of product names, slogans on tee shirts, lunch boxes, store bags and stickers, dog tags, door numbers, and store and street signs, in addition to more traditional items.

Goodman suggests that

Language is learned because people need to communicate. Children growing up in a literate society need to understand certain written language: signs, warnings, directions, messages. Comprehension of such written language will motivate learning far more effectively than candy or green stamps.

Kenneth and Yetta Goodman note that product logos are among the most attractive forms of print children encounter and one of the first forms they find meaning for. They suggest that teachers examine everything read, scanned, or glanced at for possible written language experiences in the classroom.

In the March, 1986 Reading Teacher, Gill Potter, an Australian educator, notes that "the world we live in abounds with print, and few children can escape the abundance of words that surround them." He urges early childhood educators to work constructively with this natural development.

But how? If one accepts the validity of these observations, as most people who have been involved in a young child's language acquisition will, then what? Is there anything that can be done in school to continue the language acquisition that children begin casually and informally and in response to their own needs and the demands of their environment during their preschool years? Is there a way to help children understand the connection between their functional reading experience and in-school reading? Can teachers bring the outside world into the classroom to be used instructionally? Can teachers give children reading instruction in school that will have immediate and obvious relevance to their safety and ability to function in their community?

A number of factors work together to make it difficult to identify and utilize children's preschool and out of school reading experiences in a school setting. Each child's experience is unique. It is impossible to accompany children around their community to observe their reading or call their attention to things they need to read. Thus, teachers are forced to introduce a common body of basic reading material unique to schools and unrelated to the children's functional reading experience.

Photography seems to present a way to bring the community into the school and to provide children with reading instruction that is relevant to their daily lives and has obvious significance and importance. It provides an opportunity for the teacher to work from the known to the

unknown in the area of basic reading skills. It is "the next best thing to being there" when the children leave the school and go about their daily lives.

The author's experience with the use of photographs, both slides and prints, in two small communities in Ohio during the past eight years has confirmed that children respond positively to such instruction. One discovery was that children vary greatly in their awareness of these elements in their environment. For those who were already highly aware of the print surrounding them, seeing pictures of signs in school provided valuable reinforcement and a sense of the importance to reading they could already do. For those who had largely disregarded signs and symbols around them, the pictures and accompanying lessons called their attention to the importance of such functional reading, placed it within their grasp and provided them with reading skills important to their safety and ability to function in their community. For both groups, the instruction provided a commonality of experience on which other language instruction could be based.

In the author's classroom, both slides and color prints have been used. The slides, taken on a walking tour of the surrounding community, show traffic and business signs the children see every day. The prints show familiar local buildings and landmarks, such as the school, churches, fire station, park, and stores. No particular training in photography is needed. (An ordinary 35mm single lens reflex with a zoom lens was used.) The goal is sharp, clear pictures with a minimum of extraneous detail.

The slides were analyzed for "teachable elements", such as letters of the alphabet, phonetic elements, capitalization, punctuation, and vocabulary. It was a pleasant surprise to note the valuable diversity of phonetic elements, marks of punctuation, abbreviations and vocabulary that were on business and traffic signs the children saw every day.

The slides have been used primarily for large group instruction for lessons in reading, English, and safety. Once shown, they provide a valuable reference point for any of the elements they contain: "You will remember seeing this (word, punctuation mark, usage) on the sign for...."

The color prints have been used for primary map study and to stimulate language activities. In the interest of starting with the concrete and proceeding to the abstract, it seems useful to start with maps of the territory children already know. When students understand how a map represents an area with which they are familiar, they can better understand a map of an unfamiliar or imaginary place. A small map of the local community,

obtained from the County Engineer, can be drawn as large as is practical. When street names are in place, children can locate the photographs of local buildings and familiar places. An extension of this is to develop symbols for the various types of places, creating a legend for the map, and substituting the symbols for the photographs. The photographs may stimulate oral and written language as children tell or write about familiar or favorite places and what they have seen or done there. The map with its photographs may provide a basis for lessons in giving directions from one place to another, as directions written or given orally may be carried out ("Let your fingers do the walking.") on the map. A variation of this is to have students write directions without revealing the destination, then have another student follow the directions as given to see where they lead.

A modification of this idea is the use of slides or copies of old photographs in the study of local history. Old pictures of buildings, riverboats, floods, or historic events can be professionally copied or reproduced as slides. The photographs can also be used with an appropriate map of the community to show where things used to be. The slides can accompany a talk by a local historian telling children the history of their community. As with the current photographs, the old pictures provide a sense of reality. Children know that building was really there, that flood really happened, the community was really like that. This, too, can stimulate other language activities: Storytelling, descriptive writing, role-playing. As with map study, understanding and appreciation of one's own community precedes a similar understanding and appreciation of the history of other communities. The photographs make it real and immediate enough to capture the interest of even primary grade students.

Although the photographs of signs and buildings in each school environment are unique to that location, and this fact provides the initial key to the students' experience, such communication is also, to some extent, standardized. This fact establishes links to the larger community and provides both opportunity and reason for reinforcing the instruction begun with photographs with other materials. Bulletin boards, flashcards and game materials are commercially available to reinforce these lessons. Activities built around such materials may include matching games and exercises in paraphrasing information on signs.

The students' positive response to instruction based on photographs has already been mentioned. Other reasons for such instruction, some of which have been referred to in this article, include:

- 1) To help the child establish links between his/her preschool or out of school visual graphic and symbol

recognition experience and his/her in-school reading experience.

- 2) To validate the child's previous experience with graphic symbols and build on it.
- 3) To help children become aware of the uses of graphic and symbolic language in their daily lives.
- 4) To establish the relevance of language learning in school for life outside school.
- 5) To bring into the classroom reading tasks children encounter in daily life.
- 6) To teach children to use visual information in their daily environment independently for their protection and information.
- 7) To help children recognize the use of symbolic language, abbreviations, phonetic elements, capitalization, and punctuation in daily communication.
8. To expand children's vocabulary and understanding of concepts of government and of civil behavior.
- 9) To stimulate self-reinforcement of in-school language and reading experience through awareness of the use of print and graphic symbols in the daily environment.
- 10) To stimulate discussion of factors relevant to symbolic and graphic design used in signs which identify businesses, provide information, or guide behavior.

The idea of working with print from children's daily environment in school through photographs suggests possibilities for research into its instructional value. Would it be possible to identify a group of printed and graphic symbols from the local environment with which all children entering a school had some familiarity and use them as a basis for beginning reading instruction? Would a test of the ability of children to read signs in the local community be a valuable predictor of success in primary reading? Does instruction in daily environmental reading influence students' progress in reading in the primary grades? The answers to these questions would help guide the development of programs based on bringing the child's world into the school through photographs.

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Lowell Elementary School
Lowell, Ohio

COMMUNITY PROBLEMS: REASONS FOR WRITING

By

Bill Elasky

A program called "Students Writing About Community Affairs" gives students reasons to want to write well. Developed by the Institute for Democratic Education (a "grassroots" teachers' organization based in Athens) and funded by the Hazen Foundation, this program encourages children to write for a specific audience, to develop a personal reason for writing, to assume ownership of and responsibility for their work, and to lay a good foundation for writing skills by developing many kinds of language abilities.

Interested students work together to identify a community problem, research its causes and possible solutions, choose what they believe to be the most viable solution, and then write about the process and their solution for publication--hopefully in a local newspaper, otherwise by the Institute. The program allows students to become actively involved in their community and encourages writing at a number of points within the process: note taking, writing letters to community contacts, writing summaries of interviews and other investigations, transcribing interviews, describing possible solutions, keeping journals of what they do, and writing the final article for publication. It also encourages effective use of other language arts skills as students use language to do things such as discuss procedures and information, interview and survey community members, and make arrangements and gather information over the telephone.

The program is being implemented in four classrooms during the 1986-1987 school year. It will be expanded next year when ten more teachers are recruited. Training is provided in research methods and teachers work with the program coordinator, June Berkley, to develop a "plan of attack" which incorporates individual teaching styles and a knowledge of the student participants into the program's objectives. "Children Writing About Community Affairs" is being implemented in two high school classrooms, an eighth grade classroom, and a sixth grade classroom. (I teach sixth grade.)

Although my students are considerably younger than the others, I believe that they are capable of participating in a program of this kind. In fact, I believe that the greatest obstacle for them to overcome is one common to many, if not most students: a lack of faith in their abilities to assume responsibility and accomplish anything of significance without shepherding from adults.

This is not to say that they are to be turned loose to "do their own thing," but rather that I see the teacher's role as more behind the scenes. It is my job to build student confidence, to teach them the skills they need in order to work effectively in groups, to monitor what they are doing and react appropriately to their needs, to recognize and capitalize upon opportunities to meet district objectives which are germane to this process (I count eight language objectives which could be), to act as horizon-expander and facilitator, and to help them provide the organization and structure necessary for the smooth and efficient operation of their work. I feel that my responsibilities are in some respects increased but become less overt in nature. I become an enabler rather than a ringmaster-shepherd.

While this program is in no way the centerpiece of our language program for the year, it does fit in very nicely with many of the types of activities we do in language as well as most other subjects. Many of the skills it requires students to have are supported by the language and cooperative learning experiences which form an important part of all subjects. Experiences which the students had prior to the beginning of this program will help to ensure its success. The program will strengthen and expand these skills and allow students to tackle other challenging projects during the remainder of the year.

These are the skills which I feel my students must begin to develop in order to effectively handle this program. They are also necessary for many other areas of life. Students must begin to be able to:

- participate in and contribute to discussions,
- work effectively in groups,
- evaluate group efforts,
- evaluate personal efforts,
- write for a wide variety of purposes,
- interview, transcribe interviews, and use information obtained through interviews,
- make and follow through on group and individual decisions,
- evaluate and adapt plans, activities, and related actions,
- choose topics of study,
- brainstorm,

formulate important questions to ask,
find information from a variety of sources,
develop effective presentation methods, and
effectively use the cameras and tape recorders
purchased with part of our grant money.

These skills need to be taught in a very direct manner. They must be continually encouraged and the reasons for their importance must be explained often.

The program began when I explained for the first time in detail its whats, whys, whos, and hows and allowed students to choose whether or not they would participate. Fifteen out of twenty-four full time students decided to participate. The others will continue daily writing, with most of them hoping to "publish" collections of stories or a longer work sometime in the near future.

The second step was to choose a name ("The Amesville Thinkers"), design a letterhead, and write letters to important helpers (June Berkley and Institute coordinator, George Wood). These activities helped develop group spirit and a sense of legitimacy.

At this point, I set the daily agenda, but students generally led the activities when the whole group worked together. Otherwise, subgroups accomplished necessary work. I touched base with groups often, reviewed their work with them, and tried to facilitate the process.

These things accomplished, we set about deciding what exactly we would consider to be our community. Next, we brainstormed ways to discover community problems and make necessary contacts.

I anticipate that the remainder of the program will follow these steps:

1. We will use the methods decided upon to determine problems. They will be evaluated and, if necessary, adapted.
2. The problems identified will be discussed. One or more will be chosen (the group may choose to split into two or three groups).
3. The class will determine the best method to use in gathering information about the problem(s).
4. The class will evaluate information. It will brainstorm possible solutions, checking each against facts and situations. It will work closely with those affected by the problem(s) at this point.

5. The students will choose the most likely solutions, evaluate them rigorously, and decide if more or different types of information are needed.
6. The group will decide what they consider to be the best solution.
7. We will then present the solution formally to the problem's constituency.
8. Finally, the class will write up the process and solution for publication.

We will spend thirty to forty minutes per day on this program for seven to eight weeks. I also anticipate some after school time and will actively seek parent support and assistance. Students will spend all of their writing time and, when necessary, a part of their language time working on the program.

"Students Writing About Community Affairs" is an attempt to give students a real life experience in functioning in a democratic society. It uses this experience to encourage a wide variety of writing and other language experiences. It is a very simple concept, one which can be adapted to work in a variety of settings and which requires little or no money to implement. The teaching skills which it draws upon are those which good teachers already possess or can acquire.

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Amesville Elementary School
Amesville, Ohio

CAREER ED IN SEVENTH GRADE?

By

Lois Spencer

At Fort Frye Junior-Senior High School, we begin career education in seventh grade. At this level we aren't pushing for career decisions but are providing an exploration of various careers and a small sampling of the world of work.

As the seventh grade English teacher, I begin the program in January by using COIN (Coordinated Occupational Information Network). COIN provides a profile card and scan book which allows students to match their individual interests and preferences to possible career choices. Once students have chosen two or three job possibilities, they use COIN microfiche, Occupational Outlook Handbook, and other materials from the school library to learn about these jobs. Next they select one career for a two to three page report.

COIN provides notetaking sheets which help students organize and categorize the information they are collecting. I also give them an outline form to further aid the organization process. I keep all the work papers in folders for different classes so the hard won information won't meet the fate of many homework papers.

One thing I insist upon is that students do not copy directly from their sources since they won't be using direct quotations. They do, of course, have to note all sources for use in a bibliography. This is evidently a new idea to some of them, but since I collect and read all materials from the project, I can enforce the rule against plagiarizing.

I'm not concerned about students making formal outlines but rather about dividing their information into categories which will then become paragraphs. I find that this step further removes the danger of plagiarism. Most of them manage to organize their data into logical sections.

From these working outlines, they write rough drafts, revise and proofread, and then make a final copy. They must

supply a title page and a simplified bibliography. The final product represents several class periods of hard work and demonstrates most seventh graders' ability to write an acceptable informational paper if given sufficient structure, guidance, and encouragement. As an added activity, students create career collages. I allow for artistic license here and am often delighted by the unusual and imaginative ideas some of the students express.

In late February, students watch Making It Work (available from the ITV organization) concerning job applications and interviews. Class discussions, mock interviews, and paractice application forms provide a close look at both steps toward employment. Students are later interviewed by senior steno students for jobs available in the school building and on the grounds. The "employers" are teachers and other staff members at Fort Frye and Beverly Elementary which is next door.

Getting cooperation from the staff has so far been no problem, but scheduling students into workable time slots for jobs is a challenge. I select a committee of industrious students to make charts showing students, employers, times, and jobs. Since only two hours of employment are required, teachers, coaches, and custodians can usually accommodate our work force of about 100 seventh graders during March and April.

Each of my classes has a bookkeeper who records jobs completed and issues "payroll" checks for two hours at minimum wage. These checks are "cashed" when we take our field trip in May which culminates the career exploration.

Planning the field trip also proves to be time consuming. I've been fortunate so far to find several helpful people in Parkersburg, West Virginia, who offer tours of their facilities to our youngsters. We've visited a bank, a federal government agency, a hospital, and an art gallery. Our bus drivers are lifesavers, since we have to break into groups for the tours and have students visiting two or three places simultaneously. As confusing as this sounds, it does work, and everyone enjoys the day out exploring.

After the tours, we have a late lunch at a "nice" restaurant, so a few days before our trip older students do a presentation on table etiquette for all my classes. The students then feel less uncomfortable eating in a restaurant that is not fast food. So far I've been able to arrange for a special, simplified menu and cut rates for my classes. Again, cooperative business people are invaluable.

As follow-up, my students write thank you letters to businesses, bus drivers, chaperones, and others who helped make our trip a success.

I've been asked why I continue to take on this exhausting project. Is all the planning, not to mention the red tape and headaches, worth it? In a word, yes! My students live in rural areas and small communities which offer limited job possibilities and not much chance to expand ideas and experiences. Learning about careers opens their minds to less familiar jobs within and beyond their own communities. Experiencing "employment" helps instill the work ethic. But most importantly, seeing another world out there challenges them to explore it.

For information in obtaining COIN materials contact:

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Fort Frye Junior-Senior High School
Beverly, Ohio

CAREER-SEARCH WRITING

By

Frank C. Cronin

In recent years I have experimented with the career search as a subject for writing and found that it generated strong writer enthusiasm and subsequently, valuable insights and writing experience. This fall I devoted an experimental Freshman composition course entirely to the career search. The course proved invaluable for the large majority of students who were faithful throughout the quarter in coming to their conferences, brainstorming their ideas with me, following suggestions for people and book research, writing and following up on the revising conferences.

On the other hand, a small minority procrastinated for most of the quarter, habitually missed conferences, and showered me with persuasive excuses for not producing research or writing. Most of this small group then tried to hastily finish all their researching, thinking, writing, and revising when they were burdened by the pressures of the latter part of the school quarter. Not surprisingly, most of this group did poorly. Some were able students, but they just didn't have time to think clearly, incubate their discoveries and really revise their drafts. Only a few were able to work well under the end-or-the-quarter pressure. All in all, the problems of the procrastinators and the very substantial progress made by those who worked throughout the quarter further dramatized the fact that good writing takes time.

When we teachers write something substantial, we spend most of our writing time prewriting: planning, thinking, rading, brainstorming with colleagues, and writing notes. Sometimes we take weeks or even months before we write the first draft and then allow ourselves lots of extensions to rethink and revise. How then can we reasonably expect students to "ejaculate" on command a satisfactory essay on a subject we have just assigned? (The metaphor is Donald Murray's.) Prewriting really does take eighty-five per cent of writing time--as the experts have been telling us--gathering and incubating information, thinking, and rethinking drafts after conferences. (The writing process is certainly cyclical, and the prewriting strategies come up again during revision.) For steady workers, there was deep thinking during the writing and the revising process because their lives and future happiness was "on the line."

Their first submissions were worked through again with me--and sometimes radically revised. Their designated audience consisted of college professors and bright fellow students. Consequently, lots of statements of the obvious and other wordy deadwood were cut away during the final revising. The procrastinators, by contrast, served as a kind of control group who persisted in the childish notion that all writing was a "one-shot" affair--until they heard my responses to their mechanical productions. I tried to explain to them that they just hadn't given themselves enough time to do the job successfully: time to search, think, write, rethink, and revise. Writing is a thinking process that requires lots of tough decisions. However gently I questioned the procrastinators about their writing, they became defensive. A few turned hostile. Their limited, "one-shot" writing strategies were not working as they had in the past.

During a few of these difficult, end-of-the-quarter conferences, I realized that more time would not produce more results. Far more critical to writing success than time is motivation. Even if they have enough time, some student writers are neither willing nor able to take the time to seriously work through a subject if they are not DEEPLY MOTIVATED. These few students were mentally and emotionally in academic Kiddieland. The world of responsibility was beyond them.

At these discouraging teacher dead-ends, I was reminded again of a few great truths about coaching writing: if writers don't have a subject on which they really have something to say and really want to say it to some audience, their writing process will necessarily be artificial. If they lack depth of knowledge about the subject, rethinking and reworking of the drafts will never happen, no matter how many pep talks and conferences teachers provide. Students write and revise successfully only if their own deep personal interests and concerns are somehow engaged. Thus, as Knoblauch and Brannon have noted, "an assigned topic is the most artificial of possible stimuli, having no motivational value in itself. . . ."

Fortunately, such conference questions as the following helped motivate all but the most recalcitrant.

"What are you going to do with the rest of your life?
What are your real interests?"

"How do you think those interests might translate into a satisfying career?"

"Your future happiness in the world of work will be the direct result of the choices you are now making. Do you think that you are steering your own ship or just drifting along through school while engaging in fantasy career planning?"

"What can you do well?"

"Where are the winds and tides of your life now carrying you?"

"Do you really think that you will be washed up by accident in a career destination where you will be happy and successful?"

"Career counseling specialists remind us that large numbers of people are not really happy in their careers, and many are trapped. Are you heading towards a career that is wrong for you?"

Using authorities and anecdotes, I tried to convince students from the beginning that early career planning is the most effective strategy for avoiding the trap of career discontent. I also explained why successful career planning takes time, and that it would be fun once they got into it. Also, having real, concrete goals to work towards would motivate them to do better in school. Career planning takes time because each of its two steps requires time for reflection: 1) "Discovering who I am and what activities I enjoy best", and 2) "Exploring the world of work to discover where I fit in".

The course required consistent work, but the career and writing satisfactions were substantial. As one student wrote, "In the past I was frustrated in my writing because I was simply not interested in the topics assigned. In English 153, since the topics have a direct relation to me, they are easier and much more enjoyable to write about." "Being unsure is not a very comfortable feeling," another wrote. "Now I am more confident of what I want to do in college and what paths I want to pursue upon completing college." Throughout the quarter, written feedback on the experimental course was very satisfying. The working majority were very happy with the course; it filled a critical gap in their education and helped them to learn how to improve their writing.

THE COURSE

The self-search strategies included in Richard Bolles' The Three Boxes of Life And How To Get Out of Them, A Career Workbook for Liberal Arts Students, and "Jobs of the Future" in U.S. News And World Report served as primary sources of information to get started. Students wrote brief essays about the seven most rewarding experiences of their lives. The skills involved in Bolles' "magnificent seven" were plotted on a graph and their transferability to careers considered. Careers that required the individual student's best skills and interests were then briefly surveyed.

Bolles' books and his workbook, Where Do I Go From Here With My Life?, provide a wealth of career-choice exercises that have been sharpened and developed through his seminars. For example, an exercise called "The Party", students

Imagine six distinct groups of people gathered in six corners of a party: a) the mechanically minded and athletic, b) investigators and problem solvers, c) artistic and intuitive individuals, d) people who like to work with people in order to heal, help, and inform them, e) people who like to work with people to manage, lead, and organize them, and finally, e) people who like to work with numbers and are good at details. (Boxes, p. 127, et seq.) Students choose the group they would most like to join, and when that group breaks up, their second and third choices. Then careers that involve the interests of each group are considered, especially those that overlap two chosen groups. In addition to doing several exercises of this kind, students learn that they should always have a plan B, that is, a career or course of action that they can happily follow if they are blocked from following their first choice or become dissatisfied with it.

Exercises like the ones described above facilitated the self discovery process which must precede the career choice and motivated students to think about specific careers. As they continued to talk about their new insights with each other, the instructor, friends, and parents, they began writing about their own most satisfying experiences and their reflections about them.

Research followed on specific careers that fitted each student's personality and interests. Most Freshman college students have at least a tentative career path in mind, but for many, these plans were not thought through. Some Sophomores in the class were still undecided, and there was a lot of fantasy career planning. Only a very few had made mature choices. The people and book research helped confirm or eliminate the tentative choices. Most students researched one or--at the most--two careers while the undecided searched more widely.

Brainstorming sessions with the instructor helped focus the search and also provided contacts with professionals in the community. Foresters, businessmen, health-care professionals and professors were interviewed. Graduate and upper-level undergraduates working towards the desired careers were also interviewed. Student interviewers prepared their questions carefully in advance so that their seriousness and preparation would be evident to the interviewees. Practice interviews in class and in conference encouraged students to ask probing questions and uncover negatives as well as positives in specific careers. Students were encouraged to strive to get beyond cliché responses to useful, specific information. Through the interviews, students cleared up major uncertainties about such things as their chances of breaking into specific careers, working conditions, job stability, and job satisfaction.

This phase of the research revealed to some that they were pursuing careers that were wrong for them. These individuals were relieved and happy to have made this discovery early in college. They didn't mind starting all over again--especially since they got credit for all the work they had done. They also learned the important lesson that dead ends are part of all serious research.

Library research, for some, began with the specialized sections in popular journals like Time, Newsweek, and U.S. News. After leafing through relevant periodicals in the library for stories about their fields of interest, students proceeded to The Reader's Guide. Books about careers followed, but many were out of date. Local bookstores and professionals also provided materials. Through ULRICHS and the help of the librarians, students then became acquainted with the professional journals, encyclopedias and bibliographies of their prospective fields. Some also learned what treasure troves of information are in The New York Times, The Wall Street Journal, and government documents. This research and accompanying writing prepared students for satisfying term paper work in their chosen fields. Some began to feel like professionals.

CONFERENCING

Conferencing long ago developed into an essential component of my usual composition class. Since I had just finished directing a Master's thesis on conferencing, I decided at the beginning of the quarter to experiment with a class taught almost entirely through conferences. There was one group meeting each week and the rest of the work was done in numerous long and short conferences. The observations that follow are based the usual and experimental composition classes as well as the many independent study and private make-up courses I had taught.

ADVANTAGES

For the students who came faithfully to their conferences, the benefits were substantial and progress was steady. There were in-depth discussions of the individual student's plans and thinking, preparations for and debriefing after the interviews and library research, lots of tough questions and careful reconsideration of the drafts. In the course of all this brainstorming and focused discussion, student creativity was powerfully stimulated; fresh insights came to them in the midst of the conference and during incubation time afterwards. Understandably, students often commented that this was the best English course they had ever had. For myself, the many conferences were time-consuming and draining, but I learned a lot! I believed what I had often told composition classes--that the private conferences were far more important than the

classes.

DISADVANTAGES

I also learned that conferences without classes and group workshops were not enough. One of the main disadvantages was I never really got to know the less-diligent and the unready. Over the years, I have learned to entertain and even "clown around" in class. (Fellow English teachers each have their own attention-grabbing strategies.) In conferences, on the other hand, the reflective persona dominates--as I think it would for most teachers. Listening to, thinking along with and ahead of a student require intense concentration, especially as the instructor grows tired. Consequently, the procrastinators sometimes perceived me as an inquisitor. Without the class background of friendly familiarity, procrastinators who finally showed up with superficial, poorly written papers sometimes felt that I was out to "get" them with my probing questions about what they had written. ("This is the kind of paper I have always written and you are trying to tear it apart.") Some who had paraphrased various sources into a smorgasbord paper were unable to explain what they had written. My attempts to brainstorm with these individuals to reorganize their ideas logically occasionally produced hostile responses. By contrast, the Senior students I usually teach are pleased and enthusiastic about my interest in their research! The diligent majority in this class also responded enthusiastically to my questions, and the lively exchanges that followed triggered their creativity and helped motivate thoughtful revisions. But when the hostility of the unready surfaced, the learning process was over!

In usual composition classes, I use anonymous terrible papers from the past to dramatize the ineffectiveness of padded, superficial, illogical and insubstantial papers. Even weak writers are often sophisticated readers who enjoy the game of doing a hatchet job on a made-up or anonymous paper. As audiences, even unskilled writers have standards and can become quite articulate about what they want to read and what they are not willing to continue reading--when not compelled to do so. Class exercises of this kind can help students become critical audiences for their own writing. Not only do they see clearly that mechanically written trash is an insult to the reader and therefore unacceptable in class, they also begin to think about their target audiences as they write and how they can sway those audiences.

Unfortunately, in this tutorial class, unskilled and lazy writers missed the valuable group work that they needed. Also, they missed a lot of other basics of college writing which they did not hear taught and retaught by teacher and fellow students. For example, one

procrastinator complained bitterly in an anonymously written evaluation at the end of the class that she never realized until the last two weeks of the quarter that educated readers and professors were the audiences for the writing of the class--and presumably all college writing! This surprising comment was a memorable reminder that less-diligent and less-talented students often don't grasp basic concepts unless they hear them and see them dramatized many times over in a workshop. The class workshop not only gives more articulate students lots of opportunity to think out constructive criticisms of fellow students' writing; it also provides more passive individuals with many opportunities to hear basic truths about written communication articulated in a variety of ways by fellow students.

In a conference, on the other hand, the instructor is too busy with the problems of the paper at hand to keep repeating what has already been explained. In a revision conference, for example, we know that experienced instructors focus on a few main points for each cycle of revision so the student does not become confused. In brief, the conference alone, without the class, is probably not enough for the average student.

In fact, independent study tutorials and this experimental class, viewed in contrast with my usual workshop routines, have made me wonder if conference-only courses are enough for any student, strong or weak. In a class workshop, students can be led by the teacher to entertain and encourage each other. Class camaraderie is almost essential if students are to enjoy coming to class and helping each other. If the teacher really leads and avoids monopolizing the talk, students provide lively, interested, critical audiences for each other's work and other student and professional texts. Having a live audience is a powerful motivator, and students really take each other's criticisms seriously. (Fellow students are real people not professional critics!) If the workshop atmosphere is kept supportive and the tone of the criticism positive, suggestions for improvement from fellow students are often far more persuasive than teacher criticism. This group criticism helps not only the writer whose work is being discussed, but also all those who are listening actively--because they are silently making comparisons with their own work.

During limited occasions when students were sharing with each other their new insights into their prospective careers, I regretted that there was not more class time for this exchange. The most interesting research and writing discoveries of individual students were considerably diminished when relayed second-hand by the instructor in a lecture or conference. By contrast, the immediacy and

excitement of the students sharing their writing discoveries with each other during the workshop and afterwards is a powerful motivator for progress in writing.

For most people the career choice is a haphazard procedure that easily leads to unnecessary problems. For example, Bolles cites a study in Change which shows thirty per cent of all workers in different jobs from those they held only five years earlier. Another study of all those placed in a job by a federal/state employment agency in one geographical area revealed that fifty-seven per cent were not found in the job within one month following (Cited in Boxes, p. 271). For college graduates, the picture is even more curious. For example, one study by the College Placement Council reveals that nine years after graduation MOST COLLEGE GRADUATES were in careers for which their majors were IRRELEVANT (College English). This surprising fact is an argument for a flexible major like English--with lots of writing. It is also a good argument for career planning that starts early--and for good career-search and writing courses.

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Ohio University
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LITERATURE BASED READING

By

Mick Cummings

Traditional basal reading programs seem to have failed the nation in producing a literate citizenry. Critics are constantly blaming teachers and schools for this failure; instead they should be focusing on the programs we are typically forced to use.

There is not, nor ever will be, a perfect basal reading program developed which meets the interests and needs of all of our children and complements the unique teaching styles of teachers involved. Basals are at best two sizes too large and two sizes too small for all of us. They tend to approximate the middle ground. Consequently, our best efforts are usually reduced to mediocrity.

It is my conviction that the best available alternative to break this bond of mediocrity and the key to achieving excellence is the whole language approach to learning. I believe this is true because the point of demarcation for learning is clearly the teacher and the student. Working outside the constraints of a basal reading program, one can become as excellent as his knowledge base, experience, and ambition allow. Where basal systems inhibit growth as a teacher, whole language instruction encourages it.

The same is true for students. They are free to become their best. Their limitations are restricted to innate ability, intrinsic motivational forces, and social factors. They may also be limited by the teacher's personal level of competence and ability to motivate them, but nothing else.

My classroom reading is integrated into all curricular areas. However, in this paper I'm confining my discussion to the use of literature in developing reading skills for middle grade students. Keep in mind the process described is adaptable for many age levels.

Children learn to read by reading, to write by writing, and to use language by using it. In the acquisition of all language skills function precedes form. By this I mean students speak, read, write, and spell imperfectly in their

purposeful attempts to communicate or read because they haven't internalized the refinements of language. Learning then is the process of refining form. Form improves naturally out of necessity, out of mental and phusical maturity, and out of the mature teacher seizing the moment to teach within the context of each student's individual need.

People naturally want to read. They want to decode language for personal gratification. There is an intrinsic reason to read regardless of each student's ability or level of skill. Paramount to the whole issue is attitude, the motivational force behind reading in the first place. The student who doesn't want to read won't; the student who does will.

I use a thematic approach. I have the students suggest and then select democratically the reading themes. An example would be to read books which involve humor, ones where the main characters went on a journey, or one which reflects a period of American history. The possibilities are endless.

Next I create a collection of books which reflect the theme. Some of the books will come from our classroom library; others I check out of the school, public, and university libraries.

At this point I select a book with which I am familiar and know the students will enjoy when I read it to them. It unifies the theme and provides a framework for a shared experience and whole-class learning activities. I also make sure I have several more copies of the book on hand for their references to various passages.

The next task is to create reading groups. I allow them to form groups of not less than three nor more than five students. Occasionally, I make exceptions if presented with a good argument. The process is simple. I choose a student's name and write it on the board. Then I ask who wants to work with him/her. This is usually followed by some quick discussion. As hands go up, I add three or four names to the list and a group is formed. I repeat the process until everyone is identified with a group.

Now I have the students define the work to be accomplished. How many books will each team be required to read? How much time will we spend on the theme? What will we do at the end of this theme to guarantee closure? Who will our guests be? What kind of projects will we do? How many?

We roll up our sleeves and go to work. The teams have a meeting and examine the book collection. Their main

agenda is to select the titles they intend to read and make sure there are enough multiple copies for all to read the book at the same time.

Once the reading list is established, they work out a time frame for reading. They determine the date they will begin and finish reading each book. They go a step further and decide how much needs to be read every day. They assign to themselves pages to be read during SSR or to be shared together orally, or to be read as homework.

I wander around the room from group to group to offer assistance. Nine times out of ten I'm rejected. Great! They have assumed ownership and responsibility for what has quickly become their project.

The following day work begins in earnest with me reading to them for twenty to thirty minutes. I often stop at critical points to heighten literary awareness. We compare and contrast plots, and we discuss figurative and imaginative uses of language. We also discuss and compare characters, note the author's style and technique, examine illustrations, and make predictions.

Each student keeps a reading journal, and the oral reading is often followed by my asking them to respond to the oral reading in it. I normally ask a few low level comprehension questions, then several open-ended challenging ones. At least one question will require them to relate a personal experience or situation to one posed in the literature.

An example of what I think is an ideal question is one posed by the novel My Brother Sam Is Dead, in which the authors at the end ask the reader whether or not there could have been a peaceful solution to the Revolutionary War. I ask for the "Yes" or "No" and a supporting argument. I consistently stress to my students that I'm not interested in right or answers. Instead, I'm grading their quality of thought and ability to communicate their arguments through writing.

At different points during the project, I will ask them to copy favorite passages from the books they are reading into the journal. I will ask for examples of figurative language, foreshadowing, characterizations, plot outlines, or anything else which seems appropriate at the time. I often use the reading course of study to guide me in developing reading journal questions. This helps me focus attention on essential goals and responsibilities.

Most of the books I choose offer opportunities for value clarification. Through the eyes of the story characters we are better able to understand ourselves and

the society in which we live. Stories become the springboard for debate. Here the goal is to develop oral language and critical thinking skills. I also like to follow up such debates with an essay. I ask for rough drafts and finished revised copies to be written into their journals.

It has been noted in research that students who read voraciously score highest on vocabulary tests. All of my work in vocabulary development is informal. I trust the process to develop their understanding of words. Since my students read an average of forty books a year, or about ten times the quantity of a basal program, I feel justified in avoiding rote, quickly forgotten activities. However, if you feel compelled, the journal could be an excellent record of a vocabulary development program.

Since writing is another form of reading, my students are always engaged in one form of writing or another. Literature often provides sterling examples of good writing which I call my students' attention to and have them use them as models for their writing. For example, if I have been working on descriptive or narrative paragraphs with the class, I will ask them to locate what they consider outstanding examples in books and copy them into their journals. Then I will have them write their own paragraphs using those they selected as appropriate models. The whole process heightens their own awareness of what good writing and literacy are.

A large percentage of student time is spent learning to write short stories. In order for my teaching and their understanding to be effective, I need concrete examples of requisite components of a good story. Again, the body of literature which we have shared provides models for discussion and for developing their skills. Using Lloyd Alexander's books as a vehicle to learn conventions for writing dialogue is a thousand times less bland than learning the same skill from a language textbook. The same holds true across the spectrum of reading and writing skills to be taught and learned.

Simultaneous with the whole-class learning experience, each reading group is engaged in its own more private and personal endeavors. They are busy reading and sharing good books with their friends. They get practice reading silently and orally with each other. Having opportunity to discuss with each other and me what they are reading, they are also given opportunities to compare and contrast story elements.

Often, on Fridays, I will ask them to orally share with the class passages from their regular reading which they particularly enjoyed. My purpose is twofold. First, it

ensures practice in oral reading. Second, it develops an interest in books. When a student is really excited about a book and he shares part of that excitement with the class, I am guaranteed other students will very soon be reading that book also.

Finally, after all the reading is done we have fun. Closure to the theme is punctuated by a day of our sharing our reading experiences. It is a time for dramatic interpretations, sharing creative art projects, book talks, tape recordings, or any other creative device a group can dream up to share their books with the whole class.

Briefly this describes my way of teaching reading through literature. This is by no means all that we do; there are many other kinds of reading we do also. But whatever it is, we keep in mind the following criteria:

- 1) It is for a clear purpose.
- 2) It involves real books, reference materials, or periodicals.
- 3) It represents the majority of interest of the class.
- 4) The students assume ownership and responsibility for their project.
- 5) Learning is a cooperative and collaborative effort.

If this paper has piqued your interest, contact the Barrington Road Informal School in Upper Arlington and arrange to visit their classrooms. Or you could also write the Institute for Democratic Education, Ohio University, Athens, Ohio.

Amesville Elementary School
Amesville, Ohio

GLOBAL LANGUAGE AWARENESS

Special projects for use in
the elementary classroom

by

Carole Hancock
and Debbi Winter

The world is getting smaller each year. International travel and business are commonplace. Products come to us from all parts of the world. Yet at the same time, tensions mount in many areas. At times, communication between nations seems to be nonexistent.

These are some of the reasons why it is important for our students to develop an awareness and understanding of the connections that each one of us has to the language, culture and literature of the world. This awareness needs to be developed at an early age so that our children can become understanding, tolerant, and peaceful adults.

The elementary school classroom is the perfect place to begin celebrating the differences and similarities of people around the world. Elementary students love to learn words in another language, dress in the costumes of other countries, or celebrate holidays in different ways. Enjoy the differences and stress the similarities. It is important for our students to see themselves as individual pieces of a worldwide puzzle.

Language and cultural awareness activities present perfect opportunities for using community and college resources. Bring in people who can speak another language to introduce simple terms--such as color words or numbers--in that language. Utilize people who have travelled to the country you are introducing to share their experiences with your students.

The following unit plans give examples of ways to use language, literature and cultural activities at primary and upper elementary levels. These plans may be adapted for use with many themes, works of literature, and countries. Experiment!

Unit Objectives:

1. To develop an awareness of a foreign language
2. To develop an awareness of world literature
3. To develop an awareness of each individual's connection to the world.
4. To develop self-concept
5. To develop reading skills
6. To develop creative writing skills

BALLOONS

A unit designed for upper elementary students based on the French language and The Red Balloon by Albert Lamorisse.

Suggested Unit Activities:

LANGUAGE

1. Give each student a French first name similar to his/hers
2. Create balloon-shaped name tags with "Je m'appelle. . . ." and the students' French names.
3. Introduce the basic colors in French.
4. Complete color-the-balloons worksheets. (Students must color the balloons according to the French color words given.)

GLOBAL CONNECTIONS

1. Pinpoint French-speaking areas of the world on a world map.
2. Take a survey: "How many of you are wearing or carrying something which was made in a foreign country? (Use push pins and a world map to locate places.)"
3. Take a survey about "French connections" with such questions as:
 - a. Have you seen a picture of the Statue of Liberty?
 - b. Have you taken ballet lessons?
 - c. Have you seen the word "Chic" on a pair of jeans?
 - d. Have you used mayonnaise?
 (These survey questions may be written down so that students can take the survey among friends, too.)

LITERATURE

1. Watch the movie Le Ballon Rouge. (Even though the movie is in French, the students will be able to understand the story.)
2. Read The Red Balloon by Albert Lamorisse.
3. Discuss the book, particularly the comparisons with the students' lives.
4. Discuss global connections such as emotions, reactions, and other feelings.

WRITING ACTIVITIES

1. Post a number of story starters such as: "Your balloon lands. . . ."
 - a. next to the Eiffel Tower.
 - b. at a school in Senegal.
 - c. on the roof of the International Red Cross in Geneva.
 - d. on a beach in Martinique.
2. "If you were a balloon. . . ."
 - a. where would you most like to land?
 - b. what would you look like?
 - c. who would you follow?
3. The book The Red Balloon gives many opportunities for writing activities dealing with emotions.

RELATED ACTIVITIES

1. Food
 - a. Bring in croissants and French cheese for a "pique nique".
 - b. Make quiche or mousse (may be related to a metric math unit).
2. Music
 - a. Learn the French version of "Alouette".
 - b. Learn the French version of "Frere Jacques".
3. Meteorology balloons
4. Balloon launch
5. Pen pals

SPANISH FIESTA

A unit designed for primary elementary students based on the Spanish language.

Suggested Unit Activities:

1. Invite a Spanish speaking person to class.
 - a. Select Spanish names for students; make name tags.
 - b. Discuss location of Spanish speaking countries.
 - c. Show samples of clothing, food, art of countries.
 - d. Talk about customs of the countries.
 - e. Teach color and number words
 1. Perico (a stuffed parrot)
 2. Bouncing the ball
 - f. Teach a familiar song in Spanish.
 - g. Tell a story in Spanish.
2. Have a holiday pinata party (birthday, Christmas, Valentine's Day)
 - a. Make a pinata.
 - b. Buy one (novelty stores, catalogs, Epcot Center).
3. Discuss sports popular in Spanish speaking countries.
 - a. Elicit their understanding of soccer.
 - b. Bullfighting--read Ferdinand by Munro Leaf.
4. Hold a food sampling party.
5. Make flags of Spanish speaking countries.

6. Make a class book or display about one or more of the Spanish speaking countries.
 - a. Maps
 - b. Customs, lifestyle, schools, entertainment
 - c. Recipes
 - d. Holidays
 - e. Famous natives
 - f. Climate
 - g. Pictures--National Geographic, Travel & Leisure, travel agents

WRITING ACTIVITIES

1. Thank-you note to guest speaker.
2. Plan a trip. Where would you go? What would you take? Why?
3. Pretend you are Perico; describe a day in your life.
4. Find a pen pal--initiate the first letter.
5. What kind of pinata would you like to have? Design and describe it. What would you put in it? When would you break it open?
6. Write a story about going to a bullfight. Illustrate it.

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Salem-Liberty Elementary School
 Lower Salem, Ohio
 Fort Frye High School
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SUCCESSFUL CREATIVE WRITING IN THE PRIMARY GRADES

by

Mary Anne Reutzel

Storytelling has always been a teaching tool I used frequently, but until last year I was not able to teach story writing with any success. Each student has hundreds of stories to tell--every elementary teacher can attest to that; however, the art of getting these stories from their minds and onto paper eluded me. I think both the students and I were struggling in the area between the creative and the correct.

With teacher support, encouragement, and a lot of enthusiasm elementary students can discover for themselves a whole new definition of the word writing; it no longer means just copy-work from the board. Being able to put their own ideas on paper should become an important communication skill to students. It is a skill they will be using for the rest of their lives, and it is our responsibility to teach it well.

Creative writing can be successful with elementary students. Now I encourage my students to write their story on paper exactly the way they would tell it to me. They know that whatever they write it "right", and we will correct spelling and grammar errors in the editing phases of the writing process. As long as the student writes every sound he hears in a word, most teachers can sound it out also.

Pre-writing activities are important at each level. One is to discuss the differences between various vocabularies. Each person has a slightly different vocabulary for reading, writing, listening, and speaking. I try to explain to my students that each one of us can hear and understand words that we might have trouble reading; some words can be read that we would not always be able to write and spell correctly. However, after a child has heard and understood a word in its correct usage and begins to use it verbally, it is a small step to learn how to write and spell it. This word has become an integral part of his vocabulary.

In a supportive atmosphere students will write. Some will write good stories, others just stories, but they are all writing! This area is one where the teacher can and must make allowances for individual differences. Writing can be challenging for students who finish quickly, while some students are still struggling to write complete sentences. Conferencing with small groups or individuals makes it possible for this diversity in the same class to be managed smoothly.

Publishing students' work can be simple as reading and enjoying each other's stories with the class or as elaborate as completed, illustrated books. Our sixth grade has been completing a book of collected writings and placing it in the school library for several years now. Listening to completed stories in class is one very good way for everyone to learn from each other.

The definition of a story in our second grade is simple. A story must have a beginning, a middle, and an ending; it should be written in complete sentences that begin with a capital letter and end with the correct punctuation mark. When a story has reached this level in my classroom, unless a student wants to add to it (and some of them do), it is finished, and we move on to another story. My objective is to help students become comfortable with writing their thoughts on paper. Some of my students use commas, quotation marks, and exclamation marks properly to make their stories more like the ones they are used to reading. They write stories that are about one page long and interesting to read.

Editing, proofreading and "publishing" are all individual decisions unless the story is a group project. Each child has authority over his own story, or puts it into a book of completed stories when he says it is complete.

The students direct the course of the writing. Prompts are important, of course, but it is also important for each child to know that he has authority over his own work. They guide the assignments. The students has the opportunity to say, "Today I would like to write about . . .", or they can respond to a prompt given by me.

Sometimes they want to write poems; other times they will write stories that are similar to something they have read or seen on television. The writing is theirs and eventually they become confident enough to put their own original thoughts on paper. One of my second graders even writes his stories in chapters!

The use of manila folders allows each student to have a particular and private place to keep his writing. A column can be made titles "Strengths/Weaknesses" on the back inside

cover, another one titled "Story Ideas" on the inside of the front cover (Graves, 1983). Using these columns during conferencing, a teacher can work with each student on content, spelling, or grammatical errors. I have found that I have the most success when I work just on the areas that are bothering the student on that particular day.

Many years ago I was taught that each student has his own "teachable moment" when he asks to learn a particular skill. Instead of saying, "Open your books to page 52; today we are going to learn noun and verb agreement", creative writing can be used to help each student in my classroom learn language and writing skills and bring each to the "teachable moment".

RESOURCE

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Friendship Elementary School
Friendship, Ohio

USE OF COMPOSITION TO PROMOTE STUDENT SELF-ESTEEM

By

Dianna Sue Wayne

The first weeks of school passed in a blur of endless tasks and chores for both students and teachers just a few short months ago. By now teachers and students have gotten to know each other and, hopefully, have started to create a healthy working environment. As teachers we have the unique privilege of providing new and exciting learning experiences for each of our students every day--or do we? Do students walk into our classroom ready and eager to learn or do they walk in because that is what they are expected to do? All teachers know that they cannot force students to learn anything that they are not ready to learn.

Students who have problems with self-esteem are probably not ready for all the exciting, challenging events planned for them. A student who has experienced limited success in the classroom will view an innovative exciting assignment as another opportunity to fail. Students who feel good about themselves are more likely to succeed in and out of the classroom. Creating an environment for student success is a constant, on-going endeavor that is often but not always achievable.

Self-esteem is a confidence and satisfaction in oneself which may be interpreted as self-respect and self-confidence. A number of self-esteem inventories may be used in the classroom that measure up to four categories of self-esteem: general, home, academic, and social. A student can have a high level of self-esteem in one or more of these areas and a very low level in one or more other areas. Students are perceived in many cases to be one-dimensional because teachers may have contact with them in one setting. Many times teachers may have an erroneous assumption that students who are outwardly successful, i.e., honor society members, football players, or class officers, have high levels of self-esteem. Outwardly successful students can have problems with self-confidence and personal self-esteem just as easily as students who appear to be

lacking in self-confidence and are withdrawn from those surrounding them both in and out of the classroom. The latter group of students is more easily recognized and teachers are more prone to readily identify them as lacking in self-esteem.

Self-esteem is created by everyone with whom we come into contact and by the constant repetition of success in our endeavors. Students who have relatively high levels of self-esteem will keep trying to achieve success with a task while students who have relatively low levels of self-esteem may quit at the first unsuccessful hurdle. For example, a confident student can probably handle rewriting an assignment while a student with little self-confidence will either refuse or become extremely agitated. The student who experiences a little success will gradually develop the confidence needed to keep trying even when he/she fails the first time or two. Self-esteem is nourished by a person's values, goals, standards, and attitudes--all of these contribute irrefutably to our outlook on life and how we will respond to a variety of influences as we succeed in coping with life's highs and lows.

Personal self-esteem is nurtured by self, peers, parents, siblings, teachers, and other authority figures. Teachers cannot become a student's primary resource for building self-esteem. Teachers can, however, provide experiences that allow each student to improve his/her self perception and allow the student to recognize positive influences that reinforce meaningful feelings of self-worth. We should nurture students toward success and help them to achieve the self-confidence needed to become independent, well adjusted adults.

Self-esteem is lost by repeated failures and, in some cases, just one failure. Lack of friends, broken families, feelings of rejection, substance abuse, and/or personal problems can overwhelm students to the point that academic achievement is lost. All people experience failure or rejection somewhere. Students need to become cognizant that they too will eventually succeed. The fact that they cannot succeed if they succumb to adversity and quit has to be taught and learned as well.

Self-esteem can vary drastically from day to day. In general, students who experience lots of successes have high levels of self-esteem. Parental involvement, peer groups, clubs, sports, and physical appearance contribute significantly to how a student feels about himself/herself. For instance, tell your best friend that her hair looks atrocious today and her self-esteem will plunge dramatically, both socially and academically. On the other hand, tell the basketball player who scored fourteen points

last night how sensational his playing was and watch his self-esteem skyrocket.

Students who feel like failures have low self-esteem. They may have a variety of problems: no close friends, broken families, non supportative home life, substance abuse, depression, thoughts of suicide, poor performance, and a dislike for school in general. Many of these students are the "untouchables"--those who have no close friends to be with before school, between classes and/or lunchtime. Maybe the only people who speak to these students are teachers and other school personnel. These students have not developed mechanisms to create positive feelings about themselves. Teachers need a technique to reach students to help them identify sources of positive feelings about themselves.

The use of composition in the classroom to build student self-esteem can and should be an invaluable tool for teachers. Numerous ways are available to incorporate composition into the curriculum to build self-esteem. All teachers need to remember that while they are concerned that students learn the course material being presented, they also have the responsibility for helping students become well-rounded individuals who will be able to function in our society. The use of composition can be of benefit in a variety of content areas to creatively develop the positive results that students receive from improved self-esteem. Composition is not just a tool relegated to the English classroom; it can and should be used across the curriculum. Writing gives the student an outlet for feelings and emotions, both good and bad, that he/she may choose not to verbally express in the classroom. Courage is required on the part of the student and encouragement is required on the part of the teacher to share personal thoughts, feelings, and dreams. Composition is a tool that the student can use to show a high level of competence in content understanding as well as a means of self-expression. Teachers have to be extremely careful not to reject personal confidences when a student chooses to confide in them--we can and do teach students how to clarify, edit, and rewrite for clear expression, but we cannot reject the basic concepts they are trying to express. We can redirect thinking, broaden horizons, empathize, and keep open the channels of communication through sensitive, thoughtful responses, both written and verbal.

As educators we are in a people business and for us to truly succeed, the people we deal with must feel successful. We need to teach students to believe in themselves, to have faith that success is achievable. When students believe they can achieve, they will.

Teachers are with students for such a short period of time that they cannot be knowledgeable of all their students and their individual problems. The positive attitude that we help teach a student is more important than the student's aptitude because good attitudes are needed for the positive self-esteem that is a prerequisite for academic success.

Once a teacher has identified classroom problems with self-esteem, the problem becomes one of how to manage to teach the prescribed course curriculum and encourage students to develop self-esteem concurrently. This can be done successfully once the various problems students are encountering have been identified. An activity that enhances self-esteem for one class may not work with another class and an activity that works well this year may be a disaster next year. Following are some suggestions for using writing to build self-esteem that have been used successfully.

Publish student writings for all students in a particular class or for all of your students. This creates a feeling of accomplishment and success. If you have enough cooperation, publish a newsletter for parents and administrators.

Many teachers require students to keep journals for class. This year my students wrote journals that I read but did not grade with red ink! If they wanted the journal kept confidential, they wrote me a note on the front and I respected their wishes. I wrote many comments back to them and they thoroughly enjoyed the experience of reading personal remarks that did not pertain to sentence structure. (Positive interaction with adults is important in the building of self-esteem. A successful example occurred this year when several students wrote short stories in their journals and I asked some of these students if I could have their stories typed for them to edit and published. They were pleased that I liked their stories.

Journal entries can also be focused on feelings, events, friends, or skills. At the end of a few weeks students are asked, for example, to analyze their own journal entries for feelings, verbally and/or written, with the teacher stressing that feelings are important and valued. Another approach might ask students to analyze a journal for both strengths and weaknesses in skills, emphasizing that each student can take pride in the skills that he/she possesses.

Since student writing contains both positive and negative elements, the remarks noted on papers can always be balanced--at least one positive for every negative comment. This does improve student morale and definitely builds self-esteem. Honesty is a crucial element in both the

teacher's positive and negative notes to the student writer. An insincere note is obvious and will be interpreted as demeaning. The attempt to build self-esteem can only succeed if the teacher is sincere in what he/she communicates the student.

Recently I have been grading more writing assignments in specific areas such as content and ideas, purpose, or organization, rather than counting off for every misspelled word and grammatical error. This methodology does encourage student to enjoy writing more and gives them the freedom to try to capture their fleeting thoughts and images on paper rather than worrying about which verb form to use or when to paragraph. Students are beginning to understand that rewriting a paper several times does not classify them as a failure because they did not write perfectly the first time.

Assignments that do not measure up to required standards are often turned back to students to be reworked. This usually requires some conferencing with the student, either in class or in a scheduled appointment. When conferencing the teacher should: tell the student what he/she liked; ask the student what restructuring the paper needs; if necessary, provide an example of what needs to be rewritten; make sure that the student knows that the teacher believes that the desired level of success is achievable. Sometimes I correct one section of a paper and then have the student finish the paper--this provides a visual roadmap for the student's reference.

The teacher should teach students to solve their own problems, written and verbal, with as few stated conclusions from the teacher as possible. Students need to be taught that they can rely on their own critical thinking. It is much easier to say, "This is what is wrong and this is how you should do it," than to say, "What do you think/feel is wrong with this?" When students succeed on their own, self-esteem is built.

I spend some time discussing and assigning writing about values, goals, standards, and attitudes. This can be related to an individual class or one can analyze literature and literary characters for the aforementioned. If the students are reading a novel, the classes can analyze a character's value or goals. How would their values or goals differ? Using a values or attitude inventory in class can create interest and insight. Students can discuss their differences and write a summary of their individual results. Positive self-esteem is reinforced when students can clarify values, goals, standards and attitudes.

Students with low academic self-esteem can be slowly and carefully drawn into class discussions. Once they start verbally participating in class, encouragement from the

teacher and classmates must continue. From verbal participation the transition to writing can be encouraged. Praise and encouragement are the only tools to help these students achieve recognizable success.

Avoiding red ink to grade compositions can create an atmosphere to build self-esteem instead of an additional failure. Students associate academic failure with red marks on their papers. Students quickly find that they have a teacher who does not use red marking pens and they find the fact to be extremely encouraging.

Responding to the "spirit" of what a student has written--his ideas and content rather than the mechanical errors--will create the opportunity for the teacher to show the value of the student's ideas. Asking the student where his expression needs to be strengthened builds positive self-esteem in contrast to the demeaning marking of every minor technicality. The goal of having a student rewrite for self-improvement is more achievable using teaching concepts that place more responsibility on and trust in the student.

Helping students to feel better about themselves is an achievable goal. Students need to know how to express in writing their thoughts and feelings, their dreams and their disappointments. They need to find out who they are and learn to like themselves. When we help students improve self-esteem, we improve the total quality of their lives.

Scioto County Joint Vocational School
Lucasville, Ohio

STUDENTS CRITIQUING
THEIR CLASSMATES' PAPERS:
TRAINING THE WRITER'S CRITICAL SKILLS

By

Dr. Reid Huntley

I would like to suggest a method I have found successful in training writers' critical skills: having them practice critiquing the papers of their peers. I know that some teachers use a similar method with high school students; I see no reason why somewhat the same method would not work at that level. The group with which I primarily use it are mostly Juniors in our advanced composition course, English 308-J.

The objectives of this course are what you might expect for such a course: writing a minimum of 5,000 words, in the form of five full-dress papers, each of which passes through at least one full earlier draft--what is critiqued. Most write thirty to forty pages. They also build their knowledge of writing structures and organizational patterns, the many options for paragraph development--I teach twenty-three of these--plus the ingredients of a personal style (vocabulary, images, and leit-motifs, sentence types, and tone of voice). We also work throughout the term on the process of composing; this includes specific techniques to help revise, as well as to give final polish in editing. The last goal is defining one's particular audience and determining how best to appeal to that reader or audience.

The materials for this course in advanced composition, besides Sheridan Baker's Practical Stylist With Readings and a good hardback dictionary, are the first full drafts of the five papers submitted by each student. They also write a sixth paper (an in-class paper the second class meeting for diagnostic purposes) to give them a variety of writing formats.

The PROCEDURE for class critiquing is as follows:

1. Each of the five workshop papers is due on a certain day. Late papers are not accepted. One copy is sufficient.
2. On these scheduled "workshop" days, each student reads two or three papers, writing his/her full responses to

each paper, on editing sheets. I do not read their first drafts but help with any specific problems or questions that they have on these workshop days.

3. Each writer then takes his/her paper, with written suggestions from two or three fellow students, and revises it. I also encourage them--with some specific exercises--how to revise their papers in light of their own second thoughts and deliberations. Two meetings after the workshop day, they turn in the final draft for my reading and the final grading. Their grade is the one I assign the paper, after they have benefited from their classmates' help in its earlier version.

I ask them to include in a folder the various drafts, outlines, sketches, brainstorm, and exercises along with their classmates' written comments on the "editing sheets". My collecting this menagerie from them makes plagiarism unlikely.

Because I want them to have some fairly rough first drafts on which to hone their critical skills, I ask them NOT to get anyone outside our class to read or critique their papers for this course, e.g., a roommate, girl friend, boyfriend, or parent.

The ESSAY EDITING SHEET is an idea I picked up while teaching as a visiting professor one term at Maharishi International University in Fairfield, Iowa. It looks like this:

ESSAY EDITING SHEET

Author: _____
Editor: _____

1) Trade papers with another student. 2) Read your friend's paper once through quickly, and write your overall impression in the space at the top of this sheet. 3) Read the paper again, more carefully. 4) Whenever you want to comment on something, put a number in the left margin of the paper next to that section (start with 1 and work up). 5) Then put the same number in the left margin of this sheet, adding your comment to the right. 6) Comments must be fifty per cent praise and 50 per cent constructive suggestions for rewriting. Be as specific as you can with both kinds of comments. 7) Go as deeply into the paper as you can, suggesting new angles or new ideas, if need be. If it's the next to last draft, copy-edit the paper for spelling, punctuation, and usage. Remember, as editor you're responsible for helping your friend do the best possible job. 8) When you're done, give this sheet to the author, and give the paper to a second friend. 9) This person will edit the paper a second time, using a fresh editing sheet and using letters instead of numbers. Editors should not see each other's comments. 10) Authors should wind up with

their papers (with numbers and letters down the margins), plus two sheets of editorial comments.

Overall impressions.

Numbers] Comments:
Letters]

I ask the second editor to use capital letters, the third editor--if one--to use small letters. Note that this procedure saves reproducing copies of the paper, and that each critic is more objective because he does not know what the earlier editors have said.

In my class' critiquing of the first drafts of their classmates' papers, I ask them to use the directions on the "editing sheets," but also to respond pointedly to the following aspects:

- A) thesis and ideas (including sub-points) and use of supporting examples
- B) organization: sequence, flow, structure, especially clarity
- C) style: words, images, sentence types, tone of voice
- D) grammar: spelling, punctuation, agreement, usage

Singling out these four major components of writing helps them grasp that two or three of these aspects of their writing may be just fine, and that they should work on their weakness--which is pointed out. Occasionally I split a grade: for example, an A for ideas, C for expression (which means style and grammar). I may give one basic grade, say a B, but append another grade (like a D for punctuation or an F for spelling). Then they know they had better give extra attention to that immediately. I usually give them a prescription for therapy, which they are then more inclined to take.

I also ask that they estimate the over-all worth of a classmate's draft, and assign it the grade they honestly think it deserves. They can use words rather than a letter grade. I give them a sheet "Evaluating Written Compositions" which clearly defines what each letter grade is worth. This part of the enterprise trains them in the valuable skill of evaluating, and by the end of the term most of them have a clearer notion of what constitutes excellence, what is good, adequate, barely acceptable, or unacceptable.

If each paper bears only a social security number and not a name, the editors can be more impartial in assigning a grade. Initially the students tend to be too generous. But

by the end of the term, when they have given about fifteen grades and received about fifteen grades on their own first drafts from their peers, they develop a sense of what constitutes each grade.

I have found that if they know their classmates will be reading their papers and not just the professor, they tend to work harder. To keep this whole method honest, I also evaluate them on their critiquing. And a portion of their final grade depends on the degree of help they offer their classmates. When the final drafts come in, in a packet with all work toward those final drafts, including the editing sheets, I can see what kind of help they gave their peers. The students learn to appreciate their more diligent critics, for their final papers are better.

I like this method of teaching writing for three basic reasons: the students do learn to criticize writing, which helps them in revising their future writing; I get to read papers that are more polished than otherwise they would be; and this method creates a sense of community in the class, for they get to know each other, and this comraderie carries over in other discussions.

Students appreciate this method of learning how to write because they also like getting to know each other through this kind of sharing; they like the chance to revise and the chance to get a better grade; and they like having several readers, sharing the product of their labors with more people than just the professor. (I should add that on the days they turn in their final drafts, they all share certain aspects of the completed papers: their thesis, their best image or best sentence in that paper, or some segment of the paper like the concluding paragraphs. So we do find out quite a bit about each other by this kind of sharing.)

Ohio University
Athens, Ohio

BEAR!

by

Bev Chapman and
Brenda Floding

Bears, bears everywhere . . . or so it seemed in the li-bear-y at the SOCTE conference held at Fort Frye High School in September for the session "Be Enthusiastic About Reading (BEAR)".

BEAR evolved from the 1985 Right-to-Read Week at Little Hocking Elementary (Warren Local, Washington County). The successes of that week and the additional ideas developed from them were illustrated at the conference through audience participation, discussion, a slide presentation, and an elaborate display. Display items included games, folder activities, classroom samples, stuffed bears, bear books, and a variety of attention getters. Keeping with the theme, all ideas and activities shared revolved around the use of the teddy bear.

Because it is difficult to squeeze all the cuddly bear materials into one week, a month or two can be adopted as "bear " months. Two such months include Feb-bear-ary and De-cem-bear.

Activities for Feb-bear-ary focus on the teddy bears and hearts. Flashcards using a bear pattern to match with answers on hearts can be made for reading or math practice. The Valentine Bears by Eve Bunting or stories found in children's magazines, such as Highlights, can be used to make a story sequencing folder game. Another fun folder activity or participation bulletin board works with homophones. Write sentences omitting the homophone on a bear pattern. Students "dress" the bare bears by matching the bowties containing the correct homophones.

De-cem-bear is especially fun because of all the cuddly Santa Bears available that serve as motivators. There are many folder ideas for this grizzly month.

Snow Fun--Paste pictures or sentences about bears playing in the snow in random order in a folder. Students write sentences in correct sequential order.

Beary Christmas--Paste small pictures on construction paper. Add bows so they resemble Christmas packages. Students identify the beginning consonant sound of the picture name. Those correctly identified are used to fill a stocking.

Grin and Bear It--Paste several "packages" in a folder. Write a bear-related word on each name tag. Write numbers and the word definitions on larger name tags. Students match the number of the definition tag with the package containing the word described.

Playful Pandas--Paste several pandas holding Christmas ornaments in a folder (or make them larger for the bulletin board). Print a scrambled spelling word on each ornament. Use colorful ornament designs with correct spelling to match.

Be Enthusiastic About Reading has been a very successful theme in schools throughout Ohio where the authors have conducted many workshops. The resources listed can be most helpful to get started on this beary enjoyable adventure.

RESOURCES

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Little Hocking, Ohio

Little Hocking Elementary School

GOALS IN THE SPELLING CURRICULUM

By

Dr. Marlow Ediger

Goals for learner attainment in the spelling curriculum need careful selection. Relevant ends need to be chosen. Each sequential objective in spelling should be attainable by students. Which goals then become salient for students to achieve?

1. An attitude of interest in learning to spell words is significant. Certainly, all facets of the learner and the environment being consistent, if interest in learning is present, student achievement is greater than if interest is lacking.

2. A feeling of purpose in learning to spell words is desirable. If students perceive reasons for learning to spell a given set of words, all things otherwise being equal, achievement in spelling should be at a higher level.

3. An attachment of meaning to words being mastered in spelling should aid achievement. Thus, each word needs to be understood in terms of definition and/or contextual use within a sentence.

4. Skills in associating sounds (phonemes) with symbols (graphemes) need emphasis when applicable. Students need to be aware of overgeneralizing on sound-symbol relationships when the association is not warranted.

5. Use of words mastered from a spelling list must be emphasized in functional writing. Any set of words studied by learners in a spelling lesson may be utilized in writing business letters, friendly letters, poems, plays, stories, announcements, notes of appreciation, as well as letters of sympathy.

6. Use of linguistic elements in spelling is vital. In a given set of spelling words, rhyme may be inherent such as in the following which possess a definite pattern: bat, cat, hat, fat, mat, pat, and vat. Thus, an initial consonant is changed and a new word results, e.g., bat-cat.

Linguistic elements may not be as obvious as in the following set: cable, rule, settle, meddle, and little. Each of these words contains the consistent le ending.

7. Diagnosis of errors made in spelling needs to be identified. Why does a learner misspell one or more words?

a) A human error was made which does not occur consistently.

b) Carelessness was involved in attempting to spell words.

c) Handwriting errors made for spelling errors, e.g., the cursive lower case "t" was not crossed and contained a loop, making the letter appear as an "l".

d) Inadequate attention is given in using phonics where a grapheme-phoneme relationship is in evidence in words being spelled.

Learners need to become proficient in spelling to become increasingly competent in written communication.

Northeast Missouri State University
Kirksville, Missouri

WELCOME TO CAMP WRITE-ALONG!

By

Diane Dorsey, Terry Stanford,
and Judy Walker

Welcome to Camp Write-Along!

Over hill over dale
As we hike the dusty trail
We are staying at Camp Write-Along!

In and out hear us shout
Writing's great, there is no doubt
We are staying at Camp Write-Along!

For it's playing and fun
As we work to get it done
Writers are what we want to be!

So we'll listen and learn
'Cause someday we'll return
We are staying at Camp Write-Along!!!

Can you imagine a classroom of students singing this song while pretending to be on a bus headed for Camp Write-Along? That's exactly what happens as you and your class begin the simulated journey to Camp Write-Along.

Camp Write-Along is a week long camp where students learn a variety of writing styles with the highest level of motivation you'll ever see. Each day of the week, the students write for a variety of purposes. The classroom area where the camp is to be located should be decorated with flowers, shrubs, and even artificial turf, if you can get hold of some mats of artificial grass. This gives the classroom a more authentic look, which according to Kirby and Liner (1981), can "change a composition class into a writing class." By using the following weekly plan, you and your students can enter the wonderful world of Camp Write-Along!

MONDAY

As the students board the imaginary bus for Camp Write-Along, they sing the camp song while traveling. Once at camp, the students receive a camp schedule of the weekly plan and respond to roll call by being assigned to tent groups. As a get acquainted activity, students play a memory game: "I'm going to camp and I'm going to take...." This memory activity is played by having each child repeat the list which has been given then add on their item. Point out how difficult it is for the last child to remember everything. Tell them that is why we make lists and why it is easier to categorize items.

The previous activity leads into the first objective of Camp Write-Along, which is categorizing and adjectives. The students think of a title for their lists (example: Camping Items). Next, they create four categories of sleeping, clothing, personal items and extras. The students then list nouns for each category. Now, have the students make their lists more exciting by adding adjectives (example: fluffy, soft pillow).

TUESDAY

First time campers are usually homesick by the second day. Therefore, the writing activity stressed for this day is a persuasive letter to Mom and Dad persuading them to take the camper back home. The parts of the letter are reviewed as well as paragraph structure. Having the children close their eyes and tell about a camp setting that would make them want to go home stimulates their creativity. To start the writing for this activity, the teacher reads the following opening sentences of a persuasive letter about being homesick.

Camp Write-Along
Houston, Texas
January 22, 1987

Dear Mom and Dad,

Here I am at camp! I hate being here because of the damp rainy weather. My smelly bunk is even wet!-----

Your homesick child,
Susie

WEDNESDAY

Time to get back to nature! As a prelude to informative writing, students share feathers collected from various locations. This leads to a demonstration of the steps necessary to make a pine cone bird feeder. A pine cone bird feeder is made by using these steps:

- 1) Tie yarn securely on top of a pine cone.
- 2) Spread peanut butter into open spots on the cone.
- 3) Roll cone with peanut butter in bird seed.
- 4) It is now ready to hang in a tree!

After watching the demonstration, the campers return to their tents and write directions for making a bird feeder. While they finish writing the directions, each tent group will get to make its own bird feeder.

THURSDAY

Today, the campers will be given the opportunity to express their emotions by creating an original camp song. The counselor solicits the steps needed in writing a song. The four main steps in writing a song are: idea(s), tune, words, title. The order in which the steps are used is up to the individual. Suggest to the students that using rhyming words at the end of verses helps simplify the song. Finally, have pairs of campers work together to create original camp songs. After the songs have been completed, each tent group chooses one to represent their tent for the camp contest of song writing.

FRIDAY

Closing day at camp is always a fun day for everyone. Providing you have cooperative weather, the campers experience either a real or make-believe hike. Since hiking is a strenuous activity, the campers refuel their bodies by eating s'mores. They are then given the opportunity to choose their writing activity for the day. Their choices are: to write an expressive paragraph describing the hike they just took or writing directions for s'mores. S'mores are made by spreading marshmallow creme on graham crackers and putting a small chocolate bar in between to form a sandwich.

To wrap up the memorable camping experience, an award presentation is done to give awards for:

- 1) Most Improved Writer
- 2) Best All Around Camper
- 3) Best Camping Attire
- 4) Best Camp Song
- 5) Most Industrious Group

After the ceremony, the campers are loaded back onto the bus, singing the camp song, heading for home!

Some other highlights of camp include these activities, clothing or equipment for each of the "special" days:

reading by flashlight, hat and sunglasses day, jogging suit day, canteen day, and sleeping bag day.

Once the campers return home, their adventures in camp will have such a lasting impression, they will continue to write with enthusiasm. After unloading, campers have been heard saying, "This is the most fun I've had in a long time!"

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Alief Independent School District
Houston, Texas



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NEWS

NCTE/CBC Panel Sets Competition for Ideas on Enriching Language Arts with Trade Books

"Children's Books Open Doors," sponsored by the joint committee of the National Council of Teachers of English and the Children's Book Council, is a competition designed to recognize teachers who enrich their students' learning experiences through children's literature. Teachers in kindergarten through grade 8 who describe a meaningful experience that grew out of the reading of a single trade book or group of books—not a story from a basal reader, magazine, or any other medium—are eligible to participate.

The incident described by the teacher should reveal a perceptive thought, emotional insight, or creative expression from a child or a classroom of children. (An experience based on commercially prepared materials or busywork activities will not be considered.) An important criterion in evaluating submissions will be that the idea conceived and implemented by the teacher may be replicated by other teachers.

The NCTE/CBC Joint Committee will identify from among submissions at least eight experiences in which a single child or group of children were affected by the reading of a children's trade book or group of books. Winning entries in the "Children's Books Open Doors" competition will be featured in Learning magazine during the 1988-89 school year. Each teacher whose

experience is singled out will receive \$500 worth of children's trade books from CBC member publishers and will be invited to participate in the NCTE 1988 Annual Convention in St. Louis.

The deadline for submissions is September 1, 1987. The competition winners will be announced in January 1988. All submissions become the property of the NCTE/CBC Joint Committee.

For submission information and application forms, send a self-addressed, 22¢-stamped #10 envelope to Children's Book Council, Attention: Open Doors, 67 Irving Place, New York, NY 10003.

The National Council of Teachers of English is a professional organization made up of nearly 55,000 teachers of English language arts, plus subscribers, at all levels of education. Its aim is to improve the teaching of English.

The Children's Book Council is a membership association of children's and young adult trade book publishers that encourages the reading and enjoyment of children's and young adult books.

Cochairs of the NCTE/CBC Joint Committee are Richard Ammon, Pennsylvania State University, (NCTE), and Susan Hirschman, Greenwillow Books, William Morrow and Company, New York, New York, (CBC).



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Public Information Office

NEWS

NCTE ACHIEVEMENT AWARDS IN WRITING PROGRAM RECEIVES SUPPORT FROM THE NEW YORK TIMES FOUNDATION

The 30th annual Achievement Awards in Writing competition, sponsored by the National Council of Teachers of English, is now underway. Over 6,000 U.S. and Canadian high school students entered last year's competition.

This year, the New York Times Company Foundation, Inc. has contributed \$5,000 to support the Achievement Awards program, which has had sustained support from the Maurice R. Robinson Fund.

Students compete for the awards in their junior year of high school. They write impromptu essays and submit samples of their best writing. Judging is carried out by state teams of teachers of English during the summer. Students whose writing is judged outstanding are honored in the fall of their senior year. Their names are published in a booklet which is sent in October to members of the U.S. Congress and to directors of admissions at 3,000 two- and four-year colleges, to state supervisors of English, and to NCTE leaders. A total of 778 high school seniors earned Achievement Awards in the 1986 competition.

For additional information on the Achievement Awards in Writing program, write to Achievement Awards in Writing, NCTE, 1111 Kenyon Road, Urbana, IL 61801.



Public Information Office

National Council of Teachers of English
1111 Kenyon Road, Urbana, Illinois 61801
Telephone (217) 328-3870

NEWS

EMIL SANZARI IS NEW HEAD OF NCTE'S GROUP FOR LEADERS OF HIGH SCHOOL ENGLISH DEPARTMENTS

Emil Sanzari, English Department chair at Paramus High School, Paramus, New Jersey, has been elected to a two-year term as chair of the Conference for Secondary School English Department Chairpersons (CSSEDC), a constituent group of the National Council of Teachers of English. Through an annual meeting, conference sessions, and the publication CSSEDC Quarterly, the organization provides a forum for idea-sharing and professional development for English department chairs, supervisors, and head teachers in junior and senior high schools.

As national chair, Sanzari will head the CSSEDC Executive Committee and will represent CSSEDC on the NCTE Executive Committee. Now in his 32nd year of public secondary school teaching, he has been department chair at Paramus High School since 1964.

On taking office, Sanzari commented on a major concern among English department chairs: the competency tests in basic skills now required of students in many parts of the U.S., and their effect on the public school curriculum and on the quality of teaching of English language arts. "Many states and local districts now require our students to demonstrate proficiency in language arts and math before they can receive a high school diploma," Sanzari said. "Test scores are being reported in the news media, schools are compared on the basis of these scores, and we teachers are being measured by



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NEWS

STUDENT LITERARY MAGAZINES HONORED IN NCTE'S THIRD ANNUAL AWARDS COMPETITION

Outstanding student literary magazines from senior high, junior high, and middle schools in the United States, Canada, and in American schools abroad are being recognized this month by the National Council of Teachers of English. Names of eleven schools whose magazines earned "Highest Award" status, as well as names of schools whose magazines were rated "Superior," "Excellent," and "Above Average" by judging teams, appear in a booklet now being mailed to schools which took part in the third annual NCTE Program to Recognize Excellence in Student Literary Magazines.

The student magazines were rated in the basis of literary quality (50 percent of a magazine's score), types of writing involved, quality of editing and graphic design, and student involvement in production.

"Highest Awards" for 1986 went to schools in nine states. Their magazines, listed here, were cited as tops among the 249 schools which earned "Superior" ratings from state contest judges.

Florida:	<u>Pegasus</u> , Martin County High School, Stuart
Georgia:	<u>Ragnaroc</u> , St. Pius X Catholic High School, Atlanta
Maryland:	<u>The Speak Easy</u> , Dulaney High School, Timonium
New York:	<u>Pegasus</u> , Half Hollow Hills High School East, Dix Hills
Pennsylvania:	<u>Inklings</u> , Allen High School, Allentown
South Carolina:	<u>Signature</u> , Sumter High School, Sumter
	<u>Prism</u> , Saluda High School, Saluda
Texas:	<u>Kaleidoscope</u> , Coronado High School, El Paso
	<u>Texans' Pride</u> , Sam Rayburn High School, Pasadena
Utah:	<u>Expressions</u> , Hillcrest High School, Midvale
Virginia:	<u>Matrix</u> , Fairfax High School, Fairfax

how well our students do on a basic skills exam. Teachers are being forced to teach to the tests.

"But our real mission as English department leaders is to help all students to write clearly, speak directly, and read critically," Sanzari pointed out. "Our real purpose is to know our community and build an appropriate English curriculum to meet the needs of that community. We have responsibility to help teachers help kids reach their fullest language arts potential. As English Department leaders, we cannot allow ourselves to be intimidated by the impact of state and local proficiency tests."

Sanzari, a native of New Jersey, earned his B.S. and M.A. degrees in English and dramatic arts from New York University and also studied at the University of London. He has directed summer theater, regional theater, and off-Broadway plays, and is a member of the Society of Stage Directors and Choreographers.

The National Council of Teachers of English, of which CSSEDC is a constituent group, is a nonprofit professional organization made up of teachers of English at all levels of education. Its aim is to improve the teaching of English through publications, conferences, conventions, and projects of its task groups.

Emil Sanzari can be reached for further comment at (201) 261-7800.

In the 1986 competition, 469 school magazines were rated "Excellent" by the judges; 242 magazines received ratings of "Above Average." State-level competitions are judged by teams appointed by state coordinators. "Highest Awards" are made on the basis of a second judging.

The 1987 Program to Recognize Excellence in Student Literary Magazines, now underway, will be supported by Scott, Foresman and Company, publishers. The deadline for submitting magazines to state leaders for judging is July 1. Magazines entered must have been published between September 1986 and June 1987.

For details of the competition and state leaders' names and addresses, write the Program to Recognize Excellence in Student Literary Magazines, NCTE, 1111 Kenyon Road, Urbana, IL 61801.

Fourth Annual Conference on Peer Tutoring in Writing

**November 7-8, 1987
Purdue University
West Lafayette, Indiana**

"The Writing/Tutoring Process"

Featured Speaker: Barry Kroll

This conference invites peer tutors, professional tutors, and faculty to join in discussions, workshops, and presentations to share common concerns about tutoring writing. Proposals are invited on all aspects of tutoring writing, emphasizing topics which explore the conference theme, how the writing and tutoring processes intersect and interact. Peer tutors are particularly encouraged to attend and to participate.

For information about the program, contact Phyllis Lassner; for general information about the conference, contact Muriel Harris. To register for the conference, write to : Conference Division Registration, Stewart Center, Purdue University, West Lafayette, IN 47907. Registration fees (includes four meals and snacks): \$25 per student; \$50 per faculty member.

Conference Co-Chairs:

**Muriel Harris
Dept. of English
Purdue University
West Lafayette, IN
47907
(317-494-3723)**

(and)

**Phyllis Lassner
English Composition Board
1025 Angell Hall
University of Michigan
Ann Arbor, MI 48109
(313-747-4531)**

NOTICE

The Liberal Studies program at Ohio University is now accepting applications for admission. The program leads to an interdisciplinary master's degree and may be of particular interest to area teachers.

Designed for out of school adults, the program is devoted to the values of a liberal arts education, offering mature students an alternative to the usual specialized graduate programs. It requires 45 hours of coursework plus a thesis. Each student takes three core courses, representing 15 credit hours, and 30 hours of electives.

Listed below are the three core courses, all of which will be offered on a Monday-Wednesday-Friday schedule at the Athens campus during the summer, thereby making it possible for students to complete one-third of their coursework between June and August.

LS 501 Introduction to Interdisciplinary Studies
LS 502 The Autobiographical Quest
LS 503 The Historical Integration of Knowledge

During the regular academic year at least one LS course per quarter will be offered. Classes will be scheduled in the evenings or on Saturdays so as to make them available to working adults.

For further information, including a brochure, graduate catalogue, and application form, please write to:

Peter Heldtmann, Director
Master of Liberal Studies Program
Ellis Hall
Ohio University
Athens, Ohio 45701
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